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Testimony in Opposition to SB 993:

SB 993: An Act Concerning Dental Assistants and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA)

Good day to the Co-Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee

I am Verna Bernard-Jones and I am a school nurse at West Middle School in Hartford. I'm also President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers Health Professionals, a local union representing 65 school nurses, dental hygienists, dentist and health professionals employed in the Hartford school district. I am writing testimony in opposition to SB 993 as it is written.

Hartford Public Schools has the oldest school dental program in the country. With our dental program we are able to keep students in school by bringing the service to them. However, finding qualified dentist willing to work with our students is often a problem. Recently we advertised for a dentist for over 6 months before getting someone to fill the position. As you are well aware many of the students in the school district are impoverished and do not have dental insurance other than through the state which is often not accepted by a majority of dentist. This is where the Advance Dental Hygienist would be well utilized. Please consider the following facts as you make your decision on SB 993

- **Access to dental care is a serious and growing problem.**
 - Dental care is one of the most prevalent health needs among Connecticut children and adults.
 - Connecticut's emergency rooms report ER visits related to oral health costing millions.
- **ADHP Certification will result in no increased costs to the state.**
- **There is a severe shortage of dentists – particularly among our neediest populations.**
 - 60 percent of Connecticut dentists are expected to retire in the next 15 – 20 years.
 - According to the Department of Public Health (DPH), as of April, 2010, Connecticut currently has 98 Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designations representing all or parts of 32 towns in each of Connecticut's 8 counties. This information is updated every three years and can be found at: <http://ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3132&q=388118>
- **ADHPs practice in Public Health Settings.**
 - Serve primarily low-income and uninsured in underserved areas...
 - No one is required to work with an ADHP – the ADHP program will be voluntary

Please consider amending SB 933 to include the Advance Practice Dental Assistants

Respectively submitted,

Verna Bernard-Jones, RN